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## The Social Meaning of Language and Dialect

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of human life is to serve, and to show compassion and the will to help others. Language is one of the most important features that separate humanbeings from the animal world. Language is directly connected with thought. Whereas dialect refers to a variation of a language that is characteristic of the users of that language, register refers to a variation of a language that is determined by use a situation or context. Dialects are different ways of saying the same thing; they reflect social structure (e.g., class, gender, and origin). Registers are ways of saying different things; they reflect social processes. Dialects are associated with the linguistic and cultural characteristics of the students who belong to the same broad linguistic group; registers are associated with the characteristics of the language (especially academic language) used in tests. Language as a source of measurement error addresses the fact that bilingual individuals do not typically replicate their capacities across languages

**KEYWORDS:** *Society of Human Life, language and Dialects*

### I. Introduction

Society is the human being in his social relations, and every human being is an individual embodiment of social relations, a product not only of the existing social system but of all world history. A language has many dialects differentiated according to social class and geographical area. Therefore, we have social dialects and regional dialects. A dialect can be defined as the variety of language. Linguistics, however do make a distinction between the two based on the concept of mutual intelligibility. Two languages where speakers can understand

# VISION

Journal of Language, Literature and Education  
Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris FITK UIN SU Medan  
Vol. XII, No. 12, Juli-Desember 2017

each are considered dialects of the same languages, whereas two languages where the speakers cannot understand each other are, indeed, separate languages. Language is a cultural system, individual languages may classify objects and ideas in completely different fashions.

Many persons speak more than one language; English is the most common auxiliary language in the world. When people learn a second language very well, they are said to be bilingual. They may abandon their native language entirely, because they have moved from the place where it is spoken or because of politico-economic and cultural pressure. Such factors may lead to the disappearance of languages. Many languages have become extinct, especially in the Americas and many languages divide the color spectrum into completely different and unequal units of color. Terms of address may vary according to the age, sex, and status of speaker and hearer. Linguists also distinguish between registers, i.e., activities (such as a religious service or an athletic contest) with a characteristic vocabulary and level of diction. A dialect is defined by linguists as a variety of a language that is distinguished from other varieties of the same language by its pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, discourse conventions, and other linguistic features. Dialects are rule-governed systems, with systematic deviations from other dialects of the same language (Crystal, 1997). On the linguistic characteristics of several non-standard-English dialects has found that these dialects are “as complex and as regularly patterned as other varieties of English, which are considered more standard” (Farr & Ball, 1999:206). Thus, although the term dialect is frequently used to refer to the language used by people from a particular geographic or social group or to mean a substandard variety of a language, in fact everyone speaks dialects. Different dialects may originate from contact with other languages or from the fact that certain features of a language shared by its speakers evolve among some communities but are kept among others (Wolfram, Adger, & Christian, 1999).

# VISION

Journal of Language, Literature and Education  
Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris FITK UIN SU Medan  
Vol. XII, No. 12, Juli-Desember 2017

Every person belongs to a speech community, a group of people who speak the same language.

A language is a method of communication. Human spoken and written languages can be described as a system of symbols (sometimes known as *lexemes*) and the grammars (rules) by which the symbols are manipulated. Language learning is normal in human childhood. Most human languages use patterns of sound or gesture for symbols which enable communication with others. There are thousands of human languages, and these seem to share certain properties, even though every shared property has exceptions.

The language first learned is called one's native language or mother tongue both of these terms are figurative in that the knowledge of particular languages is not inherited but learned behavior.

Individuals differ in the manner in which they speak their native tongue, although usually not markedly within a small area. Humans are uniquely adept at using systems of symbolic communication (such as language and art) for self-expression and the exchange of ideas, and for organizing themselves into purposeful groups. Humans create complex social structures composed of many cooperating and competing groups, from families and kinship networks to political states. Social interactions between humans have established an extremely wide variety of values, social norms, and rituals, which together form the basis of human society. Curiosity and the human desire to understand and influence the environment and to explain and manipulate phenomena (or events) has provided the foundation for developing science, philosophy, mythology, religion, anthropology, and numerous other fields of knowledge.

The differences among groups of speakers in the same speech community can, however, be considerable. These variations of a language constitute its dialects. This official dialect is the school form of a language, and by a familiar fallacy has been considered the norm from which everyday language deviates. Rather, the standard language is actually a development of some local dialect that has been

# VISION

Journal of Language, Literature and Education  
Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris FITK UIN SU Medan  
Vol. XII, No. 12, Juli-Desember 2017

red prestige. Use of the standard language is often a mark of polite behavior. Ordinary speech maybe affected by the standard language. Every human walks around with a certain kind of sadness. They may not wear it on their sleeves, but it's there if you look deep.

Thus, many forms of expression cometo be considered ungrammatical and substandard and are regarded as badges of ignorance, such as you was in place of t he standard you were. Language is a system of symbolic commiunication. Language is rulegoverned and primarily comprised of a pluralitof arbitrary conven tional signs. These signs will have a common significance for all members of a lin guistic group.

However, although dialects may be difficult to characterize, what is relevant to our discussion is the notion that dialect can be an important source of measurement error. the term community is used here in an ample manner to refer to a group of users of the same dialect. This group can be, for example, a school community or a group of individuals who speak the same language and live in the same neighborhood. It is not necessarily used as synonym of speech community, a concept that is somehow controversial because it assumes constancy across social contexts in the way in which individuals use a speech style (Hymes, 1974; Wardhaugh, 2002). Although the dialects spoken by different communities are mutually intelligible (Rickford & Rickford, 1995).

The 'crucial signifying practice in and through which the human subject is constructed and becomes a social being' (W. Mulford, 1983:187).

The most important, but not the only sign system of human society (some of which may also be referred to as language(s) compare body language).

## II. The Social of Human Life

In everyone's life, at some time, our inner fire goes out. It is then burst into flame by an encounter with another human being. We should all be thankful for

# VISION

Journal of Language, Literature and Education  
Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris FITK UIN SU Medan  
Vol. XII, No. 12, Juli-Desember 2017

those people who rekindle the inner spirit. The care of human life and happiness, and not their destruction, is the first and only object of good government. For good ideas and true innovation, you need human interaction, conflict, argument, debate. The human body is the best picture of the human soul. There are no greater treasures than the highest human qualities such as compassion, courage and hope. Not even tragic accident or disaster can destroy such treasures of the heart. The 'self-image' is the key to human personality and human behavior. Change the self image and you change the personality and the behavior.

Self-concept is distinguishable from self-awareness, which refers to the extent to which self-knowledge is defined, consistent, and currently applicable to one's attitudes and dispositions (Ayduk, Ozlem and Anna:2009) Thus, Self-concept is made up of one's self-schemas, and interacts with self-esteem, self-knowledge, and the social self to form the self as whole. It includes the past, present, and future selves, where future selves (or possible selves) represent individuals' ideas of what they might become, what they would like to become, or what they are afraid of becoming. Possible selves may function as incentives for certain behavior. The self-concept is an internal model that uses self-assessments in order to define one's self-schemas. Features such as personality, skills and abilities, occupation and hobbies, physical characteristics, etc. are assessed and applied to self-schemas, which are ideas of oneself in a particular dimension (e.g., someone that considers themselves a geek will associate "geek-like" qualities to themselves). The perception people have about their past or future selves is related to the perception of their current selves. In addition, people have a tendency to perceive the past self-less favorably (e.g. "I'm better than I used to be") and the future self-more positively (e.g. "I will be better than I am now").

Human beings are supposed to describe, to comprise all members belonging to the 'Homo sapiens' race: person, man, woman or child. The definition of the human being it is an universal one, each of us considering the term 'human' as the one who lives on Earth, characterized by distinctive features(

# VISION

Journal of Language, Literature and Education  
Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris FITK UIN SU Medan  
Vol. XII, No. 12, Juli-Desember 2017

superior intelligence, accurate speech). The human being and the group. The problem of man cannot be solved scientifically without a clear statement of the relationship between man and society, as seen in the primary collectivity the family, the play or instruction group, the production team and other types of formal or informal collectivity. In the family the individual abandons some of his specific features to become a member of the whole. The life of the family is related to the division of labour according to sex and age. The family is a crucial instrument for the development of personality. It is here that the child first becomes involved in social life, absorbs its values and standards of behaviour, its ways of thought, language and certain value orientations. Humans are able to create new and complex ideas, and to develop technology, which is unprecedented among other organisms on earth. Humans are highly social beings and tend to live in large complex social groups. More than any other creature, humans are capable of using systems of communication for self-expression, the exchange of ideas, and organization, and as such have created complex social structures composed of many cooperating and competing groups. Human groups range from the size of families to nations. Social interactions between humans have established an extremely wide variety of values, social norms, and rituals, which together form the basis of human society. Culture is defined here as patterns of complex symbolic behavior, i.e. all behavior that is not innate but which has to be learned through social interaction with others; such as the use of distinctive material and symbolic systems, including language, ritual, social organization, traditions, beliefs and technology. While many species communicate, language is unique to humans, a defining feature of humanity, and a cultural universal. Unlike the limited systems of other animals, human language is open an infinite number of meanings can be produced by combining a limited number of symbols. Human language also has the capacity of displacement, using words to represent things and happenings that are not presently or locally occurring, but reside in the shared imagination of interlocutors (Collins, Desmond, 1976:278). Language differs from other forms of

# VISION

Journal of Language, Literature and Education  
Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris FITK UIN SU Medan  
Vol. XII, No. 12, Juli-Desember 2017

communication in that it is modality independent; the same meanings can be conveyed through different media, auditive in speech, visually by sign language or writing, and even through tactile media such as braille. Language is central to the communication between humans, and to the sense of identity that unites nations, cultures and ethnic groups. Humans often form ethnic groups, such groups tend to be larger than kinship networks and be organized around a common identity defined variously in terms of shared ancestry and history, shared cultural norms and language, or shared biological phenotype. Such ideologies of shared characteristics are often perpetuated in the form of powerful, compelling narratives that give legitimacy and continuity to the set of shared values. Ethnic groupings often correspond to some level of political organization such as the band, tribe, city state or nation. Although ethnic groups appear and disappear through history, members of ethnic groups often conceptualize their groups as having histories going back into the deep past. Such ideologies give ethnicity a powerful role in defining social identity and in constructing solidarity between members of an ethno-political unit. Society is the system of organizations and institutions arising from interaction between humans. Within a society people can be divided into different groups according to their income, wealth, power, reputation, etc., but the structure of social stratification and the degree of social mobility differs, especially between modern and traditional societies.

## III. Language

Language Variation or Dialectal Variation, refers to changes in language due to various influences. These include, social, geographic, individual and group factors. This refers to the variety of language characteristic of a particular group of people in a given speech community (country) or region. For example one may refer to a Caribbean dialect as there are certain vocabulary items and sentence structures that Caribbean countries have in common. Fitch, W. T. (2010) argues that "A dialect is a regional or social variety of a language distinguished by

# VISION

Journal of Language, Literature and Education  
Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris FITK UIN SU Medan  
Vol. XII, No. 12, Juli-Desember 2017

pronunciation, grammar, or vocabulary, especially a variety differing from the standard literary language or speech pattern of the culture in which it exists". Speakers of any given language sometimes get offended when their particular language style is called a dialect. A mixed (mixture) language is a language that arises when two languages are in contact and there is a high degree of bilingualism among speakers. (Occasionally, more than two languages may be involved.) A mixed language differs from a pidgin in that its speakers are fluent, even native, speakers of the languages involved in the mixture, whereas a pidgin develops when groups of people with no knowledge of each other's languages come into contact and have need of a basic communication system, e.g. for trade, but do not have enough contact to learn each other's language or to develop a lingua franca. A mixed language differs from a Creole in that a mixed language has not evolved from a pidgin, while a Creole has. Also, while creoles tend to have drastically reduced inflections, mixed languages sometimes retain the inflectional complexities of both parent languages. It differs from code-switching in that it is set in its grammar and vocabulary, rather than the choice being left to the mood of the speaker.

A dialect is a variety of a language used by people from a particular geographic area. The number of speakers, and the area itself, can be of arbitrary size. It follows that a dialect for a larger area can contain plenty of (sub-) dialects, which in turn can contain dialects of yet smaller areas, etc. There is no defined line between a language and a dialect, and there are no universally accepted criteria for distinguishing languages from dialects, although a number of paradigms exist, which render sometimes contradictory results. The exact distinction is therefore a subjective one, dependent on the user's frame of reference. A dialect is a complete system of verbal communication (oral or signed but not necessarily written) with its own vocabulary and/or grammar. Sociolects, which are a variety of a language spoken by a certain social class, Varieties of language such as dialects, idiolects and sociolects can be distinguished not only by their vocabulary and grammar, but also by differences in phonology (including



# VISION

Journal of Language, Literature and Education  
Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris FITK UIN SU Medan  
Vol. XII, No. 12, Juli-Desember 2017

prosody). If the distinctions are limited to phonology, one often uses the term accent of a variety instead of variety or dialect. Human languages are usually referred to as natural languages, and the science studying them is linguistics. Making a principled distinction between one language and another is usually impossible paying attention to the historical evolution of languages results in a genetic classification of languages paying attention to the internal structure of languages (grammar) results in a typological classification of languages which is based on similarity of one or more components of the language's grammar across languages.

The world's languages have been grouped into families of languages that are believed to have common ancestors. Some of the major families are the Indo-European languages, the Afro-Asiatic languages, the Austronesian languages, and the Sino-Tibetan languages.

## IV. Dialects

Terms of dialects is one usage refers to a variety of a language that is a characteristic of a particular group of the language's speakers. Under this definition, the dialects or varieties of a particular language are closely related and, despite their differences, are most often largely mutually intelligible, especially if close to one another on the dialect continuum. The term is applied most often to regional speech patterns, but a dialect may also be defined by other factors, such as social class or ethnicity. A dialect that is associated with a particular social class can be termed a sociolect, a dialect that is associated with a particular ethnic group can be termed as ethnolect, and a regional dialect may be termed a regiolect. According to this definition, any variety of a given language constitutes "a dialect", including any standard varieties. In this case, the distinction between the "standard language" (i.e. the "standard" dialect of a particular language) and the "nonstandard" dialects of the same language is often arbitrary and based on social, political, cultural, or historical considerations. In a similar way, the definitions of the terms "language" and "dialect" may overlap and are often subject to debate, with the differentiation between the two classifications often grounded in arbitrary and/or sociopolitical motives.

# VISION

Journal of Language, Literature and Education  
Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris FITK UIN SU Medan  
Vol. XII, No. 12, Juli-Desember 2017

The "dialects" subordinate to the standard language are generally not variations on the standard language but rather separate (but often loosely related) languages in and of themselves. Thus, these "dialects" are not dialects or varieties of a particular language in the same sense as in the first usage; though they may share roots in the same family or subfamily as the standard language and may even, to varying degrees, share some mutual intelligibility with the standard language, they often did not evolve closely with the standard language or within the same linguistic subgroup or speech community as the standard language and instead may better fit the criteria of a separate language. For example, most of the various regional Romance languages of Italy, often colloquially referred to as Italian "dialects", are, in fact, not actually derived from modern standard Italian, but rather evolved from Vulgar Latin separately and individually from one another and independently of standard Italian, long prior to the diffusion of a national standardized language throughout what is now Italy. These various Latin-derived regional languages are therefore, in a linguistic sense, not truly "dialects" or varieties of the standard Italian language, but are instead better defined as their own separate languages. A dialect is distinguished by its vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation (phonology, including prosody). Where a distinction can be made only in terms of pronunciation (including prosody, or just prosody itself), the term accent may be preferred over dialect. Other types of speech varieties include jargons, which are characterized by differences in lexicon (vocabulary); slang; patois; pidgins; and argots. The particular speech patterns used by an individual are termed an idiolect. A standard dialect (also known as a standardized dialect or "standard language") is a dialect that is supported by institutions. Such institutional support may include government recognition or designation; presentation as being the "correct" form of a language in schools; published grammars, dictionaries, and textbooks that set forth a correct spoken and written form; and an extensive formal literature that employs that dialect (prose, poetry, non-fiction, etc.). There may be multiple standard dialects associated with a single language. For example, Standard American English,

# VISION

Journal of Language, Literature and Education  
Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris FITK UIN SU Medan  
Vol. XII, No. 12, Juli-Desember 2017

Standard British English, Standard Canadian English, Standard Indian English, Standard Australian English, and Standard Philippine English may all be said to be standard dialects of the English language. A nonstandard dialect, like a standard dialect, has a complete vocabulary, grammar, and syntax, but is usually not the beneficiary of institutional support. Examples of a nonstandard English dialect are Southern American English, Western Australian English, Scouse and Tyke. The Dialect Test was designed by Joseph Wright to compare different English dialects with each other.

According to Cysouw, Michael; Good, Jeff. (2013) said that "There is no universally accepted criterion for distinguishing two different languages from two dialects (i.e. varieties) of the same language". A number of rough measures exist, sometimes leading to contradictory results. The distinction is therefore subjective and depends upon the user's frame of reference. Many historical linguists view any speech form as a dialect of the older medium of communication from which it developed. This point of view sees the modern Romance languages as dialects of Latin, modern Greek as a dialect of Ancient Greek, TokPisin as a dialect of English, North Germanic as dialects of Old Norse, and Belarusian, Rusyn, and Ukrainian as dialects of Ruthenian. This paradigm is not entirely problem-free. It sees genetic relationships as paramount: the "dialects" of a "language" (which itself may be a "dialect" of a yet older language) may or may not be mutually intelligible. Moreover, a parent language may spawn several "dialects" which themselves subdivide any number of times, with some "branches" of the tree changing more rapidly than others. This can give rise to the situation in which two dialects (defined according to this paradigm) with a somewhat distant genetic relationship are mutually more readily comprehensible than more closely related dialects. In one opinion, this pattern is clearly present among the modern Romance languages, with Italian and Spanish having a high degree of mutual comprehensibility, which neither language shares with French, despite some claiming that both languages are genetically closer to French than to each other:

# VISION

Journal of Language, Literature and Education  
Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris FITK UIN SU Medan  
Vol. XII, No. 12, Juli-Desember 2017

In fact, French-Italian and French-Spanish relative mutual incomprehensibility is due to French having undergone more rapid and more pervasive phonological change than have Spanish and Italian, not to real or imagined distance in genetic relationship. In fact, Italian and French share many more root words in common that do not even appear in Spanish. For example, the Italian and French words for various foods, some family relationships, and body parts are very similar to each other, yet most of those words are completely different in Spanish. Italian "avere" and "essere" as auxiliaries for forming compound tenses are used similarly to French "avoir" and "être". Spanish only retains "haber" and has done away with "ser" in forming compound tenses. However, when it comes to phonological structures, Italian and Spanish have undergone less change than French, with the result that some native speakers of Italian and Spanish may attain a degree of mutual comprehension that permits extensive communication (Lyons, John (1981)).

A dialect refers to a branch of a language. Within this branch, different terms are used for different things. Dialects are usually formed around particular regions. However, they may also be used within certain groups of people. For example, in The United States, there is a particular dialect in the Southern states. Within that Southern dialect, however, there may be subgroups who speak yet another dialect. That is a dialect is entirely different words or ways of communicating altogether. Dialect goes beyond mere pronunciation. Dialect is used commonly in literature. An author may elect to use dialect if he or she wants to represent the characters well. In order to do so, the author will write dialogue specific to the region of the character. the definition of dialect is a linguistic variety peculiar to a particular geographical region or used by members of a specific social class. In summary, a dialect is a type of language that is spoken by a particular region or group of people. Dialect is much more broad and far reaching than accent. Most dialects will include with them their own accents, but they are more than mere pronunciation differences.

# VISION

Journal of Language, Literature and Education  
Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris FITK UIN SU Medan  
Vol. XII, No. 12, Juli-Desember 2017

## Conclusions

A dialect is a variety of language shared by a group of people (usually defined in terms of region and/or ethnicity) that has some grammatical patterns and words that differ from the “standard,” as well as nonstandard pronunciations. Although linguists have traditionally studied dialects in terms of “objective” identity characteristics (where you’re from, your ethnicity), they know that this is an oversimplification. What matters is who you interact with over and over again, and how you see those relationships. If you have a strong and close social network with others of “your group,” you will display more dialect markers of that group, especially when speaking “in-network.” If you have only weak ties with members of a dialect community, it doesn’t matter whether you share the same heritage or grew up together. Ethnicity is a complex concept, entailing self-identity, shared experiences in a specific community or community segment, at various levels, and many other factors. Thus language is only one factor in the *ethnolinguistic* description of a people, or an ethnic group. Language is a primary characteristic and an *always present* characteristic of ethnicity. Without language you would have an incomplete description of ethnicity. Language is the primary component of ethnicity. Language is tied up with our psyche, as individuals and as a society. Language is a component of thought. Thus language is integral to worldview. Differences in worldview involve differences in thought and language.

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# VISION

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Vol. XII, No. 12, Juli-Desember 2017

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